

Appl. No.: 10/717,383

Amdt. Dated March 14, 2008

Reply to Office Action Mailed December 17, 2007

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating "whistle-blowing" by one or more anonymous individuals, the method comprising the steps of:

operating an independent service organization to which a person or persons may anonymously submit a report of specific instances of fraud, misconduct, ~~error~~, and other victimization ~~within an entity, not as seller and customer~~, of and by other persons or entities,

determining whether the report supports filing a claim to obtain a reward on behalf of the reporting person or persons, and in a case where the report supports the claim, filing the claim with the victimized person or entity,

negotiating with at least one of the victimized and victimizing person or entity to obtain a the reward on behalf of the reporting person or persons making the report,

receiving a determination by one of the victimized and victimizing person or entity as to whether a reward will be granted for having made the report, if a reward is to be given, receiving same, and

in a case where said reward is obtained, collecting said reward from the victimized or victimizing person or entity either directly for the reporting person or persons anonymously or indirectly by donating it on behalf of the reporting person or persons to a nonprofit or governmental entity specified by the reporting person or persons.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the reward is collected and passed to the specified entity on behalf of the anonymous reporting person or persons, and the reward is acknowledged by the specified entity's publishing notice of the donation by the independent service organization with a code chosen by one of the organization and the reporting person or persons, thereby giving notice of completion of the whistle blowing process.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein anonymous communication is provided between the service organization and the reporting person or person by way of postings on a publicly accessible bulletin board of the service organization.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the bulletin board is an electronic one that is accessible over a global communications network and the reporting person or person selects his, her, or its own identifying code.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information is offered to the victimized person or entity and a reward is negotiated by the independent service organization with the victimized person or entity for providing the information.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the organization retains a fee from the reward monies and transfers only the balance to reporter or the specified entity.

7-8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating "whistle-blowing" to remedy and discourage fraud and other misconduct in and among public and private bodies, the method comprising the steps:

operating an independent service organization to which fraud and misconduct can be reported anonymously by at least one person while retaining contact and communication between the organization and said person for developing information about the fraud and misconduct and for transmitting a reward;

accepting information from at least said one reporting person as to specific instances of fraud and ~~other~~ misconduct that is damaging to one of said public or private bodies;

maintaining anonymity of the reporting person by affording contact and communication through an international global network by which the reporting person cannot be identified, but accepting a coded identifier for the reporting person to be used in postings at a site on the network when communication is needed;

determining whether the information is sufficient to communicate to the affected entity.

communicating sufficient information from the reporting person to the affected entity to confirm knowledge of the misconduct and its perpetrator and offering more complete information if a reward comprising a part of the damage to be recovered is agreed to by the affected entity; and

in a case where the reward is received, passing at least a portion of the reward when received by the independent service organization to at least one of the reporting person and a third party designated by the reporting person.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein receipt of the reward is acknowledged publicly by the third party in a public announcement of the payment by the independent service organization together with a code provided by or for the reporter.

11. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific instance of fraud, misconduct, and other victimization is a fraud committed upon a governmental body.

12. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the fraud committed upon the governmental body is tax fraud.

13. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific instance of fraud, misconduct, and other victimization is a fraud committed by a governmental body.

14. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific instance of fraud, misconduct, and other victimization is an instance of environmental pollution.

15. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific instance of fraud, misconduct, and other victimization is a defrauding of a business entity.

16. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific instance of fraud, misconduct, and other victimization is an instance of insurance fraud.

17. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein the specific instance of fraud and misconduct is a fraud committed upon a governmental body.

18. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the fraud committed upon the governmental body is tax fraud.

19. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein the specific instance of fraud and misconduct is a defrauding of a business entity.

20. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein the specific instance fraud and misconduct is insurance fraud.